

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 IO-11 L-03 SP-02 PRS-01 (ISO) W

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P 120755Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BERLIN 5030

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, GE, US

SUBJECT: EMBASSY COMMENTS ON DRAFT US/GDR RELATIONS DECISION MEMORANDUM

SUMMARY. THE EMBASSY WELCOMES THIS OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON THE DRAFT DECISION MEMORANDUM CONCERNING NEXT STEPS IN US-GDR RELATIONS NOW IN PREPARATION IN THE DEPARTMENT. WE HAVE RECEIVED THE SECOND DRAFT OF THIS MEMORANDUM AND UNDERSTAND THAT CHANGES HAVE BEEN MADE SINCE THEN. OUR COMMENTS, THEREFORE, DO NOT NARROWLY FOCUS ON THE LANGUAGE OF THE SECOND DRAFT, BUT PROVIDE SOME THOUGHTS ON THE OVERALL STATE OF OUR RELATIONS AND HOW WE MIGHT BEST APPROACH THE FUTURE. END SUMMARY.

1. THIS IS THE RIGHT TIME TO CONSIDER NEXT STEPS VIS-A-VIS THE GDR. THE DRAFT PAPER CONTAINS A USEFUL CHECKLIST OF SPECIFIC ISSUES IN OUR RELATIONS, AS YET UNADDRESSED, THAT ARE OF INTEREST TO BOTH SIDES. WE FULLY SUPPORT THE RECOMMENDATION THAT THE USG SIGNAL TO THE GDR, THROUGH ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN, OUR WILLINGNESS TO MOVE FORWARD IN CERTAIN AREAS WHERE PROGRESS IS FEASIBLE AND BENEFITS TO THE US ARE POSSIBLE. SUCH AN INITIATIVE WOULD PROBABLY ALSO STENGTHEN THE POSITION OF THOSE WITHIN THE GDR LEADERSHIP WHO ADVOCATE A FURTHER DEGREE OF ACCOMMODATION WITH THE US IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE GDR GOALS.

CHARACTER OF US-GDR RELATIONS.

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2. THE FIRST YEAR OUR RELATIONS HAS, WE AGREE, BEEN CHARACTERIZED BY A "SOMEWHAT NEGATIVE ATMOSPHERE" (PAGE 7, OF THE DEPARTMENT'S SECOND DRAFT). THIS WAS LARGELY INEVITABLE, GIVEN OUR DIFFERING VIEWS OF THE WORLD, AND IS A CONDITION THAT IS LIKELY TO PERSIST. WE QUESTION, HOWEVER, THE EXTENT OF "GDR FUSTRATION OVER NOT OBTAINING ANY POSITIVE BENEFITS AFTER ONE YEAR OF TIES WITH TH US" (PAGE 7). THE GDR RECEIVES CONTINUING PROPAGANDA AND PRESTIGE BENEFITS FROM THE FACT OF US RECOGNITION THAT SHOULD NOT BE UNDERESTIMATED. IT ALSO PROFITS IN MANY WAYS FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN BERLIN AND THE ACTIVITIES OF ITS OWN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON.

3. NOR IS IT CLEAR THAT THERE IS AN "OBVIOUS GDR DESIRE TO IMPROVE TIES WITH THE UNITED STATES" (PAGE 1). RECENT SACTIONS OF THE REGIME, SUCH AS THE NOTEWORTHY REFUSAL TO ISSUE A VISA IN THE PASSPORT OF AN EMBASSY DEPENDENT WHOSE PLACE OF BIRTH (HAMBURG) IS LISTED AS "GERMANY," AND CONTINUED UNWILLINGNESS TO PROGRAM WELL-KNOWN US CULTURAL FIGURES, DEMONSTRATE THAT THE REGIME'S INTEREST IN IMPROVING RELATIONS IN CERTAIN AREAS IS NOT SRRONG ENOUGH TO DETER IT FROM INTRODUCING IRRITATIONS OF A NIGGLING KIND INTO OUR DAY-TO-DAY RELATIONS.

GOALS, PRIORITIES, AND TIMING.

4. WE BELIEVE THE POINT THAT THE US SHOULD DETERMINE THE PACE OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELATIONS SHOULD BE UNDERSCORED. WHAT IS ESSENTIAL, IN OUR VIEW, IS THAT WE MOVE WITH DELIBERATION AND NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE NEED TO KEEP THE BENEFITS IN BALANCE AS WE TAKE UP NEW BUSINESS. OUR NEXT STEPS WITH THE GDR SHOULD OCCUR ON THE BASIS OF A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF US INTERESTS AND PRIORITIES; THE CHECKLIST IN THE DEPARTMENT'S DRAFT PROVIDES A COMPILATION OF ISSUES TO TAKE UP THROUGH TIME.

5. OUR ACTIONS AND THE TIMING OF WHAT WE DO MUST ALSO BE CONSIDERED IN LIGHT OF FACTORS OUTSIDE THE BILATERAL FRAMEWORK. THESE INCLUDE FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS IN THE FRG, THE FEBRUARY CPSU CONGRESS AND THE SED CONGRESS IN MAY, AND THE CURRENT STATE OF OUR RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION. ANOTHER ASPECT OF TIMING, IN CONNECTION WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN'S CONFIDENTIAL

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PROPOSED APPROACH TO AMBASSADOR SIEBER, IS THE RELATIONSHIP OF THIS DEMARCHE TO THE THIRD ROUND OF CONSULAR NEGOTIATIONS SCHEDULED TO BE HELD IN WASHINGTON IN FEBRUARY OR MARCH. WE BELIEVE AN APPROACH TO THE EAST GERMANS BEFORE THE THIRD ROUND IS OVER IS INADVISABLE AND MIGHT HARDEN THEIR POSITION.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

6. WE SUGGEST THAT FOUR ISSUES BE RAISED AT THIS TIME BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN: (A) RECIPROCAL PORT ACCESS; (B) TECHNICAL TALKS ON FISHERIES; (C) FOREIGN TRADE REPRESENTATION OFFICES IN THE US AND GDR; AND (D) AN OMNIBUS AGREEMENT INCLUDING CULTURAL EXCHANGES. IS APPEARS TO US THAT SUCCESSFUL RESOLUTION OF THESE ISSUES CAN PROVIDE THE RIGHT BALANCE OF BENEFITS.

7. CONCERNING A POSSIBLE VISIT BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN TO THE GDR IN 1976, WE RECOMMEND AGAINST HIS COMING TO ATTEND THE LEIPZIG FAIR. WE BELIEVE MR. HARTMAN'S VISIT SHOULD BE KEPT IN A POLITICAL CONTEXT IN ORDER TO FURTHER THE DISCUSSION OF ISSUES (AND PERHAPS TO SIGN AN AGREEMENT, SHOULD ONE BE READY). OUR VIEW REMAINS, ALSO, THAT THIS IS NOT THE YEAR FOR A US VISIT BY POLITBURO MEMBER HERMANN AXEN, AT LEAST UNTIL IT IS DETERMINED THAT SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS HAS OCCURED IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS.  
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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** FOREIGN RELATIONS, DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 12 JAN 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** BoyleJA  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976BERLIN05030  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** X1  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760010-0460  
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**Image Path:**  
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**Line Count:** 133  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION EUR  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** STADIS, LIMDIS  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** STADIS, LIMDIS  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** BoyleJA  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 26 APR 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <26 APR 2004 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <19 AUG 2004 by BoyleJA>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** EMBASSY COMMENTS ON DRAFT US/GDR RELATIONS DECISION MEMORANDUM SUMMARY. THE EMBASSY WELCOMES THIS OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON  
**TAGS:** PFOR, GC, US  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006